



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** TPB Technical Committee  
**FROM:** John Swanson, Transportation Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Projects recommended for funding in FY 2018 in the District of Columbia under the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program  
**DATE:** October 6, 2017

**SUMMARY**

Under the federal Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TA Set Aside) Program, the TPB is responsible for selecting projects using sub-allocated funding for Suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The TA Set Aside, which is part of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, was previously known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and that name is commonly still used.

For FY 2018, the TPB is responsible for project selection for \$1,150,000 in the District of Columbia. A selection panel has recommended that the following projects be approved by the TPB at its meeting on October 18, 2017:

Project	Sponsor	Total Cost	TAP Funding Request (80%)	Panel Recommendation
18th and Constitution Ave: Crosswalk and Access to Memorial	National Park Service	\$176,000	\$140,800	\$140,800
Historic Olmsted Parkways Enhancement	DC Office of Planning	\$775,000	\$620,000	\$460,896
Smart Bio-Retention: Jay Street NE Retrofit	DC Department of Energy and Environment	\$315,380	\$252,304	\$252,304
Taft Bridget Lion Statue Restoration	DC Department of Transportation	\$20,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Union Station Legionnaires and Interior Restoration	DC Department of Transportation	\$750,000	\$600,000	\$280,000

## BACKGROUND

The Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TA Set Aside) Program was established by federal law to fund a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails, safe routes to school (SRTS) projects, community improvements, and environmental mitigation. MAP 21, the surface transportation legislation enacted in 2012, established the program as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The FAST Act of 2015 renamed the program as the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TA Set Aside) Program, but the key features of the program largely remain the same. Information on the TA Set Aside is available from FHWA at: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_alternatives/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/).

The program provides sub-allocated funding for large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like the TPB (classified as “Transportation Management Areas”) to fund local projects. In addition to these sub-allocated funds, a portion of the TA Set Aside funding is reserved for statewide project selection, which is conducted by the state departments of transportation.

For the National Capital Region, the program offers an opportunity to support and enhance regional planning activities. At the direction of the TPB, our region’s TA Set Aside is framed as a complementary component of the TPB’s Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program, which provides technical assistance for small planning studies to TPB member jurisdictions.

The TA Set Aside offers the region the ability to fund projects that support regional priorities and goals based on the *Regional Transportation Priorities Plan* and *Region Forward*. Applicants from the National Capital Region are asked to show how their projects will serve these priorities when they seek TA Set Aside funds. The priorities also provide the basis for the selection criteria that the TPB’s selection panel uses when it reviews and recommends projects for funding.

## FY 2018 SOLICITATION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

For FY 2018 in the District of Columbia, DDOT informed TPB staff that the TPB has responsibility for project selection for **\$1.15 million**. DDOT has discretion for decision-making over an additional \$1.15 million, which will be used for Safe Routes to School projects.

DDOT conducted the project solicitation for the FY2018 TA Set-Aside funding in the spring of this year. The applications were due on May 15. The DDOT application included a supplementary form requesting information about how projects address the TPB’s regional priorities, including promoting non-motorized circulation within Activity Centers, enhancing access to transit stations, and increasing multimodal transportation options.

DDOT received five discrete applications, representing a combined total of **\$1,629,104**. A sixth application was also submitted, which was essentially a subset (a partial request) of one of the five discrete applications noted above.

The federal regulations for the TA Set-Aside require a 20% local match. DDOT has indicated that it will ensure that the match for all approved projects is provided by DDOT.

Federal regulations typically prohibit state DOTs from receiving TAP funding. However, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has ruled that DDOT, in its function as a department of local government, is eligible to apply for TAP funding. DDOT submitted two applications for consideration in this funding round.

## PROJECT SELECTION

The same TAP selection process is used for all three states. To develop draft recommendations, TPB staff invited representatives from the Maryland and Virginia departments of transportation, along with COG/TPB staff, to participate on a selection panel. Colleen Hawkins from DDOT participated in the panel discussion and served as a technical resource for the meeting.

Panel participants included:

- Christy Bernal, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Cindy Englehart, Virginia Department of Transportation
- Michael Farrell, COG/TPB
- Nicole McCall, COG
- John Swanson, COG/TPB

Panel members individually reviewed and scored applications for a maximum of 100 points combining each reviewer's professional assessment (50 points) and regional selection criteria (50 points). The professional assessment is based on each panel member's transportation planning expertise, knowledge of transportation planning in the region, evaluation of the project budget, and project management experience. The regional criteria are rooted in TPB policies and programs, with the understanding that some projects would not meet all criteria. Regional selection criteria included the following:

- **Transportation options** (10pts): Will the project significantly increase transportation options for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-drivers? Will the transportation benefits of the project be more than just recreational?
- **Regional Activity Centers** (10pts): Does the project enhance walkability and accessibility within or between Regional Activity Centers?
- **Safe routes to school** (5pts): Does the project enhance safe bicycle and pedestrian access to elementary and middle schools? Has the applicant submitted all the supplementary information for Safe Routes to School-based projects?
- **Disadvantaged communities** (5pts): Does the project promote accessibility for people in the TPB's Equity Emphasis Areas, which were approved by the TPB in March 2017?
- **Persons with disabilities** (5pts): Is the project largely intended to promote accessibility for people with disabilities?
- **Local commitment** (5pts): Does the application provide local matches greater than the 20 percent minimum requirement? Does the application note any other local resources or priority given to the project? (All D.C. applications were automatically given these five points.)

The panel met via WebEx on October 4, 2017. To provide a basis for discussion, each member provided general rankings for each project application (high, medium, or low) based on the numerical score they gave each project. The group discussed each project individually and asked the DDOT representative for additional information regarding the applications. The panel then agreed upon

joint preliminary rankings of high, medium, or low for each project. As a final step, the group determined funding recommendations based on these rankings. The final recommendations are the result of consensus. The recommendations are jointly decided and are not simply a quantitative sum of each panelist's individual scores.

At the end of the meeting on October 5, 2017, the review panel recommended full or partial funding for all five applications. A table listing all the submitted applications and funding recommendations is attached to this memorandum.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Following the TPB's action on the FY 2018 recommendations, which is scheduled for October 18, TPB staff will forward information regarding the approval of projects to DDOT.

For FY 2019 funding, TPB staff will work with DDOT on the application process, which will be launched next spring.

**TPB Selection Panel Recommendations - FY 2018 Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program for the District of Columbia**

	<b>Project</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>TA Set-Aside Funding Request (80%)</b>	<b>Panel Recommendation</b>	<b>Project Description</b>
1	18th and Constitution Ave: Crosswalk and Access to Memorial	National Park Service	\$176,000	\$140,800	\$140,800	Develop Safe Crosswalk at 18th and Constitution Avenue NW and provide an accessible route to the Declaration of Independence Memorial
2	Historic Olmsted Parkways Enhancement*	DC Office of Planning	\$775,000	\$620,000	\$460,896	Plant trees and beautify four parkways designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. – Alabama/Texas avenues, Minnesota Avenue, Missouri/South Dakota avenues, and Nebraska/Arizona avenues.
3	Smart Bio-Retention: Jay Street NE Retrofit	DC Department of Energy and Environment	\$315,380	\$252,304	\$252,304	Implement a Continuous Monitoring and Adaptive Control (CMAC) system which will enhance an existing bio-retention facility by mitigating flood risks and improving runoff water quality.
4	Taft Bridge Lion Statues Restoration	DC Department of Transportation	\$20,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	Restore monumental statues on the William Howard Taft Bridge on Connecticut Avenue over Rock Creek.
5	Union Station Roman Legionnaires Statue and Interior Restoration**	DC Department of Transportation	\$750,000	\$600,000	\$280,000	Restore 42 plaster statues of Roman Legionnaires in Union Station and restore the interior walls of the Main Hall.
			\$2,036,380	\$1,629,104	\$1,150,000	

\*In approving this project, the Selection Panel requested that DCOP provide DDOT with a more specified indication of how maintenance will be ensured.

\*\* In addition to this larger application, DDOT submitted a separate application seeking \$280,00 in TA Set-Aside funding only for the restoration of the statues. The Selection Panel recommended funding for this statues-only proposal.